

The EU has a diversity and inclusion problem. It's high time for a change. Let's be that change!

There is no climate justice without racial justice

The consequences of the climate crisis as we know it threatens the future of humanity as a whole - and is the lived realities of many communities of the Global South.

This inequality of impacts is due to an ingrained system of unequal exchange and power relations rooted in colonial history and perpetuated through unfettered neoliberal capitalist exploitation. The Global North benefits from a sociopolitical and economic hegemony only made possible through the continued oppression and exploitation of the Global South. This hegemony is built upon this unequal exchange, through the continued exploitation of and perverse international division of labour and flow of resources. This unequal exchange between countries is not only of power, resources and labour, but of responsibility and externalities, resulting in the Global South impacted the worst by the climate crisis despite the Global North being responsible for 92% of all excess emissions.[1, 2]

Even within Western countries, indigenous, racialised and ethnic-minoritised communities [3] are amongst those that suffer the most from this crisis due to deeply entrenched structural and systemic inequalities.

Analysing this necessitates an understanding of coloniality and the field of decoloniality. Coloniality is looking beyond the colonisation of countries into the various systems in place that reinforce power imbalances and systemic racialised inequalities and unequal exchange. Decoloniality therefore is both a framework of understanding and of resistance. As a framework of understanding, it seeks to recognise these systems of oppression and to move beyond the dominant White normativity that reinforces such systems. To do this it pursues changing our frames of reference and the way in which knowledge is currently produced. The norms, systems, and narratives we accept have been defined primarily by the West. Decoloniality emphasises the diverse knowledges from the Global South and the co-production of knowledge to form new understandings. As a theory of resistance, it seeks to dismantle such systems and the underlying structures reinforcing them and thus freeing an institution, a sphere of activity, and so on, from the chains of colonialism, and its cultural or social effects.

Indigenous, racialised and ethnic-minoritised communities continue to be subject to such inequalities through the historical entrenchment and contemporary perpetuation of a system of institutional, systemic, and social racism. This unequal exchange of power, resources, and labour, whether with intent or unconscious neglect, manifests similarly within Western countries, intertwines climate change with racism and increasingly exposes indigenous, racialised and ethnic-minoritised communities to environmental devastation and health risks.[4] The reality we must acknowledge and confront is that the climate crisis is inherently racist.[5]



And yet, despite the various efforts and movements by indigenous, racialised and ethnic-minoritised communities to fight for their livelihoods and environment, they continue to not only be unheard or forgotten [6], but also they are often erased from the climate movement [7]. We must acknowledge the reality that Western environmentalist narratives have historically been used to justify imperialist conservation and environmental policies that devastated indigenous and local communities in the Global South [8]. Such practices continue today, in conservation and preservation, and in extractivist projects in Europe and the Global South [ibid]. Therefore, it is crucial that indigenous, racialised and ethnic-minoritised communities are an integral part of our green movement. We must listen to, platform, amplify, and support their fight for climate justice. Striving for ecological sustainability without first prioritising decolonial justice perpetuates these neocolonial asymmetries through imperialist environmentalism. Without the reversal of this unequal exchange and perverse flow of resources, we end up powering the Global North's transition through continued exploitation of the Global South or at the expense of indigenous, racialised and ethnic-minoritised communities in the Global North. We see this for example through the extractivist projects in indigenous Sámi and Inuit lands, often even portrayed as 'green' initiatives to mitigate emissions or power the transition, which threaten or actively destroy their lands, livelihoods, communities, and wellbeing.[9] In metropolitan France, cities with higher precarious populations are more likely to welcome hazardous sites like incinerators and waste management facilities are more likely to be located near towns with higher immigrant populations, and racialised suburbs or districts of larger cities are often closer to large ring roads and intersections known as échangeurs - thus disproportionately exposing inhabitants to higher pollution and risks of health hazards. Due to the racist oppression, racialised and ethnic-minoritised communities and immigrant populations often find themselves in those cities or in racialised districts or suburbs of larger cities, exposed to ecological threats.[ibid]

Thus, there is no climate justice without racial justice, and it is impossible to strive for a socially just ecology without decoloniality. **Indigenous, racialised and ethnic-minoritised communities are at the forefront of the climate crisis: they should be at the forefront of the Green movement.**

Pursuing a Green movement for all in EU24

The Green movement, including us in the European Greens, has a diversity and representation problem,[10] stemming from its problems of inclusion.

"As we echo the #BrusselsSoWhite movement in its criticisms of the Whiteness of EU institutions, we must reflect on the role we must play to change this, and extend this analysis to the various other local, regional, national, and European institutions that are similarly dominated by a White normativity".

In the past, the European Greens have presented manifestoes and resolutions that only mention racialised and ethnic-minoritised peoples and the Global South with regards to asylum and (social) discrimination.[11] The issues and interests of racialised and ethnic-minoritised peoples and the Global South go much further than this, and are intertwined with many other issues. Moving forward, we must see a much more intersectional focus, an acknowledgement of present-day asymmetries, and the culpability and responsibility of Europe to confront them. Thus, as we head



into these elections, we need meaningful substantive representation and inclusion - the incorporation of racial justice and the interests of indigenous, racialised and ethnic-minoritised peoples within party manifestos, campaigns, and the agenda of European politics. Reflecting on this, we, the European Green Party and Green Parties of Europe commit to striving for such inclusion and ensuring a Green platform for all - one that truly listens to and reflects the interests of indigenous, racialised and ethnic-minoritised peoples.

At the same time, we need descriptive representation. 96% of Members of the European Parliament are White. Political decisions affect different people and communities differently. Therefore, it is important that a wide variety of voices of indigenous, racialised and ethnic minoritised communities are heard and represented in the decision-making process. Studies show politicians of minoritised identities are more likely to advocate for the rights of minoritised communities.[12, 13, 14] We see this to be true in the European Parliament, as after six decades, it was racialised and ethnic-minoritised Green MEPs Alice Bah Kuhnke who tabled the report and resolution on intersectional discrimination, one of the first of its kind, and Romeo Franz who tabled the report and resolution on Roma equality, inclusion and participation, one of its firsts, and S&D MEP Evin Incir who tabled the first ever report and resolution on anti-racism. However, regardless of this point, indigenous, racialised and ethnic-minoritised communities deserve to see themselves reflected in the political structures that represent them. Much more must be done to improve representation across the European Parliament at all levels.

Any analysis of and responses to the experiences of oppression of indigenous, racialised and ethnic-minoritised peoples must not neglect the intersectional dimensions of discrimination. Dimensions of gender, sexuality, socioeconomic class, immigration status, and disability, amongst others, converge and compound the forms of oppression and discrimination faced by indigenous, racialised and ethnic-minoritised peoples, and as such, any analysis and response must also consider the intertwined nature of identity in oppression. Thus, efforts for racial justice must include other forms of social justice, just as how climate justice must include racial justice. The fight for equality is intersectional, and a Green movement for all must be one that is intercultural and intersectional. As Greens we acknowledge that many different entry barriers to politics exist and are committed to continue our fight for just political representation for all members of society.

Therefore, we, the European Green Party and Green Parties of Europe, commit to:

Politically:

- **Increasingly include, platform, listen to, and work more closely with racial justice organisations and activists** in Europe and from the Global South. We should actively strive to support, collaborate with and highlight the work of indigenous, racialised and ethnic-minoritised activists at the forefront of this movement, especially those in the Global South;
- **Incorporate and emphasise racial justice, inclusion, representation, and a broader decolonial and intersectional framework of thinking** in setting up their campaigns and manifestos for EU24;
- **Actively encourage indigenous, racialised and ethnic-minoritised greens** to run for the European Parliament as well as in national, regional and local elections via their respective member parties. Doing so we must take into consideration the disparities

and barriers to accessibility and intersectional dimension of discrimination faced by indigenous, racialised and ethnic-minoritised communities in politics, and, where possible, accounting for this in such efforts.

Organisationally:

- **Take steps to assess the practices, policies, and cultures of their internal organisation** and on how this excludes or includes or fosters an atmosphere of exclusion or inclusion for racialised and ethnic-minoritised peoples;
- **Work more actively to become more inclusive**, for example by working on meaningful diversity and inclusion plans with concrete goals that address the barriers of exclusion and manners of inclusion for racialised and ethnic-minoritised peoples in our respective parties and the internal structures thereof, taking into account the assessments above and the intersectional dimension of discrimination;
- **Support and encourage indigenous, racialised, and ethnic-minoritised peoples to apply for positions within our internal political organisation and staff**, and where possible and necessary, evaluates our hiring processes to ensure their accessibility and inclusivity, taking into account the intersectional dimension of discrimination, and also make an effort to tap in to other networks to find other profile than the usual candidates who apply.

We, the European Green Party further commit to:

- **Incorporate the development or expansion of diversity and inclusion assessments, policies, and practices** with regards to our internal organisation within future Activity Plans;
- **Provide a report on our progress regarding diversity and inclusion** with regards to initiatives carried out, assessments thereof, and progress made, in our Activity Report;

We urge that:

- **This be the first of one of many future steps** to expand the European Greens' and our member parties' work on decoloniality, interculturality, racial justice, representation, and inclusion politically and within our internal organisation;
- **All components of the European Greens**, politically, within our international organisation, and through our member parties, aim to place decoloniality, interculturality, inclusion, and racial justice at the very heart of our collective movement.

References

[1] Silva, G. T. (2022). An overview of strategies for social-ecological transformation in the field of trade and decolonialisation. In Barlow, N., Regen, L., Cadiou, N., Chertkovskaya, E., Hollweg, M., Plank, C., Schulken, M., & Wolf, V. (Eds.), *Degrowth & Strategy: How to Bring about Social-Ecological Transformation* (pp. 375-382). Mayfly Books.

[2] Hickel, J. (2020). Quantifying national responsibility for climate breakdown: an equality-based



attribution approach for carbon dioxide emissions in excess of the planetary boundary. *Lancet Planet Health*, 4(9), e399-404. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2542-5196\(20\)30196-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2542-5196(20)30196-0).

[3] With the terms racialised and ethnic-minoritised, we drew reference to the Oxfam Inclusive Language Guide. We refer to the processes in which the concepts of racial and ethnic identity have been used to subordinate a certain group of people or 'otherise' or differentiate them from the majority population. In emphasising this process, we emphasise the differentials in allocations of power, representation, resources, and so on between racialised and minoritised communities and the majority population in the context that they live in.

The solution therefore is not to make the minority or racialised 'other' part of the majority and to homogenise society, it is the opposite. It gives recognition to the subordinated role of this community, and how we must therefore strive for equity in protecting their (cultural) rights and languages, in striving for representation, and in listening to them. The use of the term 'minoritisation' does not intend to strip anyone of agency, nor does it mean one cannot have pride in one's identity. We acknowledge and want to stress the agency of individuals, and there are those, due to their lived experiences and social contexts, who choose to identify with a certain ethnic identity. Ethnic-minoritised does not remove this agency, it intends to stress power differentials between minority and majority populations.

In addition, by making these terms adjectives, it requires the addition of 'peoples', 'communities', or 'individuals', to ensure people-first language.

[4] These processes and systems of unequal exchange, exploitation, and oppression are, in short, reproductions of colonial asymmetries, manifested in different forms: social, cultural, financial, ethnic, educational, political, etc. Through its interweaving in so many facets of life, often structurally, it can manifest in very subtle ways – through conscious intent or unconscious neglect. This makes coloniality so complex and difficult to see and recognise, and also what makes it such an essential struggle to wage as we strive for a decolonial ecology. See also: Mignolo, W. D., & Walsh, C. E. (2018). Interculturality and Decoloniality. In *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis* (pp. 57-80). Duke University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv11g9616.7>.

[5] Williams, J. (2022, January 27). Why climate change is inherently racist. *BBC Future*. <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20220125-why-climate-change-is-inherently-racist>.

[6] Agyeman, J. (2022, October 6). People of colour have been shut out of the climate debate. Social justice is the key to a greener world. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/oct/06/colour-climate-social-justice-green-environmental>.

[7] Lakhani, N. (2022, September 17). 'Africa is on the frontlines but not the front pages': Vanessa Nakate on her climate fight. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/sep/17/vanessa-nakate-climate-activist-africa-cop27>.

[8] Kashwan, P., Duffy, R. V., Massé, F., Asiyanbi, A. P., & Marijnen, E. (2021) From Racialized Neocolonial Global Conservation to an Inclusive and Regenerative Conservation. *Environment: Science and Policy for Sustainable Development*, 63(4), pp. 4-19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00139157.2021.1924574>.

[9] See detailed information on these case studies and other case studies in Europe in: Ramanujam, A. & Asri, N. (2022). *The Climate Crisis is a (Neo)colonial Capitalist Crisis: Experiences, Responses and Steps Towards Decolonising Climate Action*. European Network Against Racism. https://www.enar-eu.org/wp-content/uploads/2022_report-climatechangeandrace_final.pdf.

[10] Edkins, D. (2021, March 26). Does the climate movement have a diversity problem? *The Big*



Issue. <https://www.bigissue.com/news/environment/does-the-climate-movement-have-a-diversity-problem/>.

[11] In the 2019 elections priorities 'What European Greens fight for' and manifesto 'Time to renew the promise of Europe', fighting racism is only brought up with regards to migration and refugees, and discrimination and hate crimes. Chapters dedicated to 'Shared prosperity' and 'People power' lack any further mention of racism or racial justice, even in a subsection dedicated to inclusion and cohesion. Similarly, the chapter on a 'Clean and safe planet' lacks any mention of inequalities and power- and capacity-differentials faced by the Global South, nor acknowledgement of Europe/ Global North's culpability and responsibility in this. The chapter is further completely deracialised, even in a subsection dedicated to environmental justice, with no mention or implication of climate racism or the protection of indigenous communities and lands.

Likewise, in the resolution 'Hope in challenging times: Let's make a green future possible in the 2024 European elections' adopted at the 36th Council (now Congress) in Copenhagen in December 2022, racialised and ethnic-minoritised peoples and the Global South (implied through 'globally committed') are only mentioned with regards to fundamental rights, refugees, and being aware of our colonial past and responsibility for justice.

[12] Lowande, K., Ritchie, M., & Lauterbach, E. (2019). Descriptive and Substantive Representation in Congress: Evidence from 80,000 Congressional Inquiries. *American Journal of Political Science*, 63(3), 644-659. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12443>.

[13] Sobolewska, M., McKee, R., & Campbell, R. (2018). Explaining motivation to represent: how does descriptive representation lead to substantive representation of racial and ethnic minorities?. *West European Politics*, 41(6), 1237-1261. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2018.1455408>.

[14] Broockman, D. E. (2013). Black Politicians Are More Intrinsically Motivated to Advance Blacks' Interests: A Field Experiment Manipulating Political Incentives. *American Journal of Political Science*, 57(3), 521-536. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12018>.